The Leveller

Carleton's new student and community newspaper

Carleton's paper of record since right now… with a glamorous and collectable pinup poster map **no 1** | 9 February 2009

OTTAWA BUSES ARE BACK

by **VICTORIA ABRAHAM**

Buses return to Ottawa streets this week after a very long absence. The transit strike, which began on December 10, came to an end on Thursday, January 29 after 51 days.

It was the threat of back-to-work legislation by federal labour minister Rona Ambrose that forced the union and the city to accept the agreement of binding arbitration on all outstanding issues without any preconditions.

The residents of Ottawa can expect to see 67% of buses operating today with free O-Train and bus services until February 15. The full service on all bus routes is expected to come in by April 6.

The issues of the strike, which involved approximately 2,300 workers, were wages, scheduling, sick leaves, and contracting out services. The main issue however was work scheduling.

Since 1999, OC Transpo drivers have been able to choose their own bookings from the routes and schedules determined by management. They achieved this scheduling in exchange for a 2.2% pay cut. The idea behind this was that senior drivers could have first pick of the routes they wished to work, so that they could have weekends free. After all, at the time, many drivers had not had a weekend free for many years, some for more than a decade.

The Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 279 saw this as an issue of fairness and safety. Allowing senior drivers to pick the routes they wanted first gave them the chance to work the less physically stressful routes and allowed them more time with their families during evenings and weekends.

The city proposed to change the existing system to give it more control over the work scheduling. The city claimed its proposal, which required drivers to do different routes throughout the day, would be more efficient and cost-effective.

This system would have extended a driver's spread, which is the amount of time a driver is available to the company, from 12 to 13.5 hours, and the workday from a maximum of 8.5 to 10 hours, without compensation. The scheduling issue is what had kept the ATU Local 279 employees and the city from reaching an agreement.

For the ATU Local 279 and the drivers it represents, the strike has been a lesson in the power of union and solidarity.

STUDENTS OPPOSE BOARD GAG RULE

by **STAFF**

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) last Monday released a letter condemning guidelines adopted by Carleton University's Board of Governors late in 2008 that prevent board members from speaking to the media about board decisions.

The guidelines, which apply to all board members, are of particular relevance to elected representatives (student, faculty, and staff members of the board), who are often placed in what the board refers to as a "conflict of interest" situation, where their responsibilities as board members conflict with their responsibility to their constituencies.

The Board of Governors is, along with the Senate, the most important decision-making body at the university, having responsibility for finance and property and all other business matters. A majority of the board is composed of people external to the university —that is, not student, staff or faculty representatives.

The guidelines were prepared by the Board's Governance Committee and approved by the board at its December 17 meeting. The guidelines were adopted by the board when board members criticized the university's handling of the September 2007 strike by members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 2424.

The crucial part in the guidelines is the stipulation that board members not "comment negatively outside a meeting of the board or one of its committees on a decision reached by the Board or any of its Committees." The document directs members to forward all requests for comment to the chair of the board, the university secretary, or the president, effectively muzzling dissident members.

> "A university is a public institution with freedom of speech and unhindered debate as its cornerstone," Vaage asserted that "ensuring that it is accountable to the public requires that decisions are made in a transparent fashion."

In a letter addressed to all board members, GSA vice-president external Lesley Vaage decried the policy the board has adopted calling on the board to respect the right of student members to adequately represent students.

Describing the university as "a public a public institution with freedom of speech and unhindered debate as its cornerstone," Vaage asserted that "ensuring that it is accountable to the public requires that decisions are made in a transparent fashion."

The letter points out that the policy "limits the capacity of student representatives, as elected by the primary stakeholders, to speak out on decisions of the board that they feel jeopardize the accessibility of post-secondary education, which includes criticizing board decisions to increase tuition fees."

GSA president Nathan Hauch, who was elected a year ago on a platform of opposing tuition fee increases, is one of the student members of the Board of Governors.

There is no indication in the documents what penalties would be imposed on board members who refused to adhere to the guidelines.

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Level-ler
noun

1 Historical: During the English Civil War (c. 1649), one who favoured the abolition of all rank and privilege. Originally an insult, later embraced by radical anti-Royalists.

2 One who tells the truth, as in "I'm going to level with you."

3 An instrument that knocks down things that are standing up or digs up things that are buried or hidden.

The Leveller is a publication covering news, current events, and culture at Carleton University, in the city of Ottawa and, to a lesser extent, the wider world. It is intended to provide readers with a lively portrait of the university and their community and of the events that give it meaning. It is also intended to be a forum for provocative editorializing and lively debate on issues of concern to Carleton students, staff, and faculty as well as Ottawa residents.

The Leveller leans left, meaning that it sides with people over private property, and is democratic, meaning that it favours open discussion over silencing and secrecy. Within these very general boundaries, *The Leveller* is primarily interested in being interesting, in saying something worth saying and worth reading about. It doesn't mind getting a few things wrong if it gets that part right.

The Leveller is mostly the work of a small group of volunteers, so far. In fact it is produced entirely by volunteers. To become a more permanent enterprise, it will require more volunteers to write, edit, and produce, to take the pictures, and to dig up the stories, and to make it a more truly democratic and representative paper.

The Leveller needs you. It needs you to read it, talk about it, discuss it with your friends, agree with it, disagree with it, write a letter, write a story (or send in a story idea), join in the producing of it, or just denounce it. Ultimately it needs you—or someone like you—to edit it, to guide it towards maturity, to give it financial security and someplace warm and safe to live.

The Leveller is an ambitious little rag. It wants to be simultaneously irreverent and important, to demand responsibility from others while it shakes it off itself, to be a fun-house mirror we can laugh at ourselves in and a map we can use to find ourselves and our city in. It wants to be your coolest, most in-the-know friend and your social conscience at the same time. It has its work cut out for it.

The Leveller is published every two weeks, at the beginning of the week. It is free.

The Leveller and its editors have no phone or office, but can be contacted with letters of love or hate at *editors.the.leveller@gmail.com*

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THE LEVELLER NEEDS YOU!!!

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Story Meeting

The Leveller's first story meeting is 2:00 pm Tuesday, February 17 at Mike's Place. At this meeting, each issue's content will be generated and discussed.

Those who are thinking about volunteering with ***The Leveller*** are encouraged to attend.

Those who want to contribute stories, features, articles, and opinion pieces should also make an appearance.

At this meeting, we will be discussing the content for Issue 2, due to come out February 23.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit your articles, opinion pieces, features, listings, classifieds, ads, or letters as an e-mail attachment to *editors.the.leveller@gmail.com* by noon the Thursday prior to printing.

Articles should be a maximum of 800 words, opinion pieces at most 600, and listings, announcements, briefs, or events 50 words. Features can be up to 2000, but must be arranged in advance with the editors.

Letters to the editor that are more than 200 words may be published, but ***The Leveller*** reserves the right to edit letters for length. Submissions must include your name and phone number. You may ask to have your name withheld from publication.

The Leveller reserves the right to edit or refuse any material that is considered unfit for publication as determined by the editors.

When Typing:
–Leave a space between the headline and byline.
–Do not indent paragraphs.
–Do not leave space between paragraphs.
–Type the whole article single-spaced and leave only one space after a period, not two.

When You're Done:
–Spell-check document.
–Word-count document.
–Write your name and phone number, and send it to us.
–Save your work as an .rtf file.
–E-mail it to us.

Printing Dates:
The Leveller will print four issues this semester: February 9, February 23, March 9, and March 23. Submission deadlines are noon February 19, March 5, and March 19.

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CUSA ELECTIONS UPDATE

by **STAFF**

Carleton students, like most others in Canada and Quebec, are in the midst of election season. The Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA) is holding executive and council elections alongside Board of Governors undergraduate elections and referendums.

For CUSA's over 25,000 members, the past five months have been a roller coaster of activism and controversy. Last November, thousands of students participated in the Drop Fees campaign, culminating in one of the largest student demonstrations in recent years on Parliament Hill.

Less than a month later, CUSA council made national headlines for its decision to switch charities from Shinerama to an annual rotating charity. There remains much controversy and confusion over what exactly led to the motion being passed, in part, but not solely, because of factually inaccurate information about the communities most affected by cystic fibrosis. Some candidates are raising the issue on their platforms but the extent to which this is just hollow politicking remains an open question.

The general consensus on campus to have tuition fees frozen or lowered has ensured that the two competing slates for CUSA executive, as well as independent candidates, have endorsed the call for lower tuition. The "Because It Matters" slate is advocating a continuation of the Drop Fees strategy of grassroots student mobilizations, which include petition drives, educational events, and demonstrations.

The current VP student issues who spearheaded the Drop Fees campaign, Erik Halliwell, is running for president on this slate. His opponents include Bruce Kyereh-Addo of the "Demand Better" slate, who was the last president of the now defunct Black Students Association, and independent Cameron Macintosh.

Photo: Daniel Tubb

Another race to watch closely is VP student issues, which tends to reveal each slate's approach to student advocacy. Carlos Chacón, the only other current member of the executive running again, is looking to win this position for "Because It Matters." At a February 5 candidates' debate, Chacón's opponent on the "Demand Better" slate, Nick Bergamini, called for efforts in tuition fee reductions to be limited to lobbying politicians. Chacón replied that CUSA and other student unions have repeatedly tried and been rebuffed, making public protests a necessary recourse.

The same debate also brought up another key issue for students: public transit. Erik Halliwell, who organized the much-needed shuttle bus service, is calling for a student seat on City Hall's transit committee. This approach clashes with that of Nick Bergamini, who is advocating for a lobbying campaign to make transit an essential service. This is a controversial position that clashes with past CUSA practices of defending the collective bargaining process and the right to strike.

The question of student space also remains critically important. The university administration has continuously supported Aramark's monopoly of campus food services, to the frustration of clubs' and societies' fundraising efforts, as well as, most shamefully, the annual Ramadan festival.

Carleton students have many choices before them, one of the most important of which is whether or not these candidates will build an inclusive, active student union capable of advocating effectively on behalf of student interests or a student government that provides a less controversial but likely less effective and engaging approach.

BRIEFS

TA Contract

TAs at Carleton University voted 66% to ratify a new collective agreement. Highlights include a 3% pay increase for all TAs and improvements to benefit plans. However, the agreement effectively removes tuition increase protection for future TAs, reducing their take-home pay as tuition increases outpace wage increases. International students will face particularly sharp wage cuts. Current TAs will be unaffected by the new collective agreement.

York Federation of Students

The fallout from the TA and contract faculty strike at York University has continued unabated. YFS has been campaigning for a 12% tuition fee refund based on the shortening of the school year and has gathered over 10,000 signatures for the refund. Meanwhile, an estimated 2,500 students have signed a petition to impeach the current YFS executive for allegedly failing to represent students during the strike. Hamid Osman, YFS president, has dismissed his critics as "politically opportunistic" and for undermining efforts to get the tuition fee refund.

OPIRG-CARLETON

Ontario Public Interest Research Group // Action for Social Change

OPIRG-Carleton is a non- profit student-run organization involved in research,education and action on social, economic and environmental issues. All students at Carleton University are members of OPIRG through a $6.30 fee in your tuition (for full-time students). Everyone is welcome to visit our office and use our resource library. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

OPIRG Carleton Working Groups Include:
Books to Prisoners, Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa, Animal Rights, Carleton Sustainable Campus Netowrk, Students Against Israeli Apartheid, Oxbow Park Naturalization Project, and more ...

What OPIRG-Carleton has to offer:

* **Resource Centre** including hundreds of books, documents, periodicals and videos.
* Fall and Winter **Colloquium Speakers** featuring topical speakers that encourage critical and interconnected analysis of various issues.
* **Volunteer Opportunities** to help keep the office functioning, host speakers and conferences and ensure important work on various issues gets done.
* **Space to Organize** whether it's a single event or a larger movement.
* **Training** on everything from anti-oppression and consensus to silk screening, media messaging and how to measure your ecological foot print.
* **Working Groups** that focus on a wide-range of social justice and environmental issues
* **Free Store** a place to find lots of treasures or recycle unneeded items
* **Wednesday Weekly** E-Newsletter including info about actions, events and announcements.
* **Radical Frosh** a politically progressive, alternative orientation to Carleton University and the city of Ottawa.
* **Terry Cottam Research Bursary** given annually to a graduate student.
* **Film nights, Info Fairs, Speaking Tours** and much more!

326 Unicentre Building, Carleton University ▪ 613.520.2757 ▪ opirg-carleton.org

BRIEFS

SSHRC funds for "business-related degrees"

The 2009 budget will increase funding to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) by $17.5 million for students in "business-related degrees" —the practical meaning of which is not clear given SSHRC's mandate and the limited number of business students seeking research support.

U of O Student Elections

University of Ottawa undergrads are gearing up for student union (SFUO) and Board of Governor elections as well as referendum questions. The vote will take place from February 10 to 12. One of the key issues in the campaign is the affiliation of SFUO with the Canadian Federation of Students. Last November, U of O undergrads voted to join CFS by a narrow margin, joining their grad students and all Carleton students. The presidential race has four candidates, including Seamus Wolfe, a current member of the SFUO executive and outspoken supporter of SFUO's membership in CFS.

LOCAL

DEREGULATING ONTARIO

by **DOUG NESBITT**

Investigations by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and Toronto Star have revealed a policy implemented by Dalton McGuinty's government to drastically reduce regulatory procedures in each government ministry.

The policy is outlined in a 46-page document entitled *Open for Business: Guide to Reduce the Burden.* Implemented in September 2008, *Open for Business* calls for each government ministry to reduce regulations by 25 to 35%. The document asserts that deregulation is necessary for "faster, smarter and more streamlined government services to business," which will make Ontario more attractive for investment and help make existing businesses become more competitive. The document also demands that with the introduction of each new regulation, two existing regulations be eliminated.

Even though the policy is designed to "respond directly to the needs of business," regulations that do not affect business will be counted towards the 25% target. The definition of regulation is disturbingly broad. The document defines regulation as any "compulsion, obligation, demand or prohibition placed on an individual or entity by or under the authority of a provincial Act, regulation or related policy instrument."

Equally disturbing is the manner in which the policy was drafted and implemented. Although *Open for Business* repeatedly cites consultation with business organizations, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Federation of Independent Business, there have been no public consultations. Nor has *Open for Business* been publicly announced. Only in early February, through the efforts of the OFL and Toronto Star, has *Open for Business* become public knowledge. According to the OFL investigation, *Open for Business* has only been mentioned six times during the entire 39th Session of the Ontario Legislature and has gone unmentioned during recent fiscal review

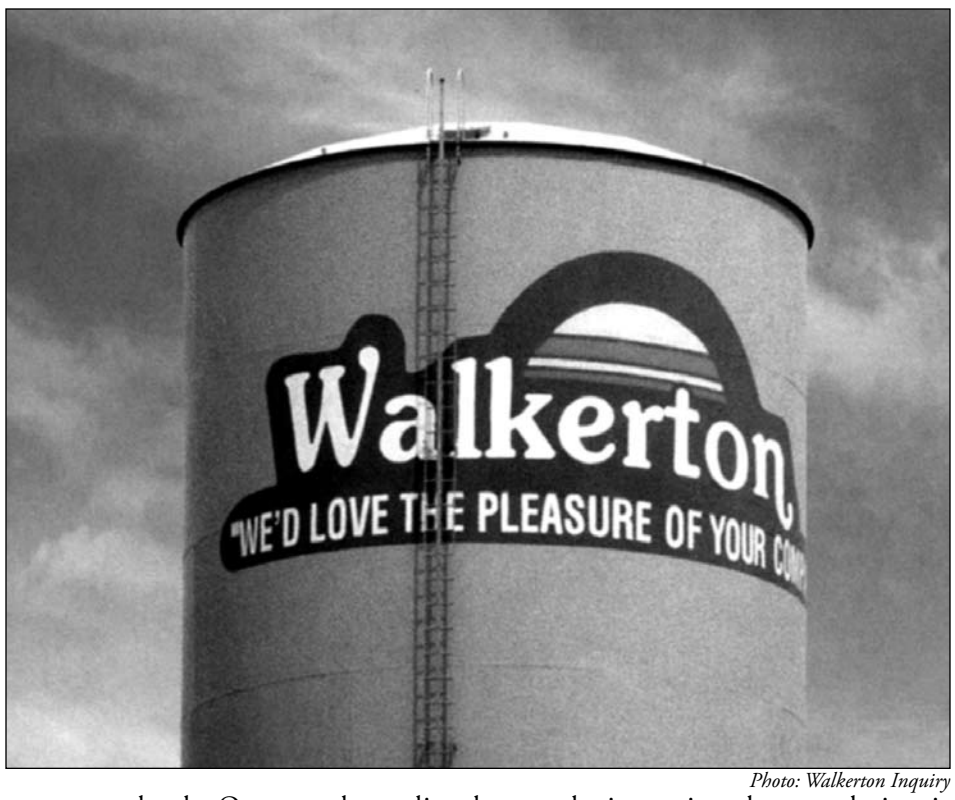


Photo: Walkerton Inquiry

statements by the Ontario government. Nor does McGuinty's Five-Point Economic Plan say anything about deregulation even though *Open for Business* describes itself as "a foundation for the success of Ontario's Five-Point Economic Plan." On top of all this, quarterly progress reports will only be reported to Ontario businesses. The OFL claims that the lack of transparency about the policy has made it extremely difficult for any investigation to uncover how the policy is being implemented.

OFL president Wayne Samuelson has written an open letter to Premier McGuinty citing his "grave concern" for the lack of transparency and the content of the policy. Samuelson and the OFL call for the policy to be reversed with full disclosure, arguing that regulation is "a public good, essential to the protection of Ontario's citizens and the prevention of disasters and tragedies." The OFL describes deregulation as a "discredited idea" with a "tragic legacy" and cites the critical role of deregulation in facilitating both the Maple Leaf Foods listeriosis outbreak and the 2000 Walkerton E. coli outbreak.

CUPE Local 4600

CARLETON'S TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND CONTRACT INSTRUCTORS

The members of CUPE 4600 TA Bargaining Unit 1 have voted 66% in favor of the memorandum of settlement, reached by the Negotiating Committees of CUPE 4600 and Carleton University.

The CUPE 4600 Negotiating Committee and Executive wish to thank all the members who have participated in the 2008 bargaining process, beginning with the survey sent out in the winter of 2008, continuing throughout the meetings in the fall and ending with the historic turnout for the votes in 2009.

We will continue to represent the membership with the new collective agreement to the best of our ability.

For more information, or to become involved contact CUPE4600@carleton.ca, visit the Union Office at 511A Unicenter, or call 613-520-7482

THE UNIVERSITY WORKS BECAUSE WE DO!

LOCAL

Ottawa Centre MPP backs snitch hotline that will terrorize Ottawa

by **LYNN HUNTER**

Proposed provincial Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation, which allows for persons anonymously accused of illegal behaviour to be summarily evicted, has ruffled feathers of local residents as it picks up momentum at Queens Park.

The bill, introduced by Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi in October 2008, would empower municipalities to appoint a director of SCAN, who would act on anonymous complaints of illegal behaviours or any other behaviour that adversely affects the health, safety, or security of the community.

Naqvi claims that SCAN offers a solution to the costly hassle of lengthy criminal investigations and court battles. Naqvi's alternate system would allow the director to set up surveillance of targeted homes, resolve conflicts informally, and evict tenants through a Community Safety Order issued by the Superior Court.

As the bill moves through Queen's Park, a growing coalition of tenants' rights and anti-poverty groups are raising concerns about potential negative outcomes of the bill. Chief concerns include the lack of an accessible appeals process for tenants, lack of oversight provisions for the director, and violations of privacy rights.

Coalition partners are questioning the need to create an alternate system to penalize citizens for engaging in criminal activities. Currently illegal activities are investigated through the judicial system, but SCAN could have tenants evicted with no judicial process. NDP MPP Cheri DiNovo said "if a tenant's conduct is illegal, they should be arrested, not evicted."

SCAN opponents are also concerned that the bill has no oversight provisions for the director and no accessible complaints process for accused tenants. Orders of eviction currently can be appealed through the Landlord and Tenant Board with the help of community workers. Under SCAN, appeals would go through the Ontario Superior Court, where tenants would need to hire a lawyer.

In addition, legal experts have raised concerns about SCAN as tenants will not hear the evidence against them, have the right to cross-examine the person making allegations, or have proper notice to prepare a defence case.

Critics say the bill will have a disproportionate impact on groups already facing discrimination in the housing market. The anonymous complaints procedure would help individuals restrict the migration of marginalized groups into their neighbourhoods, through the imposition of surveillance, evictions, and harassment of those tenants deemed undesirable.

As the bill moves towards its final vote at Queen's Park, Naqvi is aiming to appease the growing coalition but members are unsure whether the bill can be salvaged. Coalition groups are instead ramping up the opposition campaign, optimistic that SCAN can be stopped.

Photo: The Blackbird

NATIONAL

STIMULUS BUDGET?

Setting the foundation for a new round of slash and burn

by **DAVID TOUGH**

Jim Flaherty's "stimulus budget," which was passed by the House of Commons on Tuesday, was a remarkable document that will reverberate for a number of years in Canada's social life. Ostensibly a response to the threat of a rapidly depressing economy, it laid the groundwork for yet another assault on the public sector and the social welfare state.

While analysts and pundits are shaking their heads over the apparent apostasy of Flaherty and Stephen Harper shovelling out public money in great barrelsful, the crux of the budget is the cuts to personal income tax, which, along with the increased spending, will launch the federal government into a recession that will be difficult if not impossible to get out of in the next few years.

The tax cuts are meant to have a direct effect on spending. With more money in their pockets, the finance minister argues, taxpayers will spend more, thus stimulating the economy. The cuts follow earlier cuts to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) made by the government since its 2006 election victory.

In fact, the cuts are unlikely to be a useful stimulus. Taxpayers in lower tax brackets will not spend their tax savings if they're afraid they might lose their job or their pension in the downturned economy. They will save it, negating the immediate stimulus effect the budget is intended to provide.

The problem with cutting taxes to stimulate the economy isn't simply that it doesn't work. It also weakens the state at the very time that industry, consumers, and workers are looking to the government for leadership. Faced with an emerging economic crisis of indeterminate length and scope, Ottawa has essentially just emptied its pockets and unhooked its tool belt.

Even more importantly, a tax-cut budget sets into play a long-term scenario that's hard to reverse – one that sees declining tax revenue and soaring deficits used as the pretext for eliminating what little is left of the mechanisms for redistributing wealth between Canadians on the basis of ability to pay.

Certainly we have been here before. In the 1990s, the fear that out-of-control deficits would bankrupt the federal government inspired a radical reconceptualization of the role of the state, and the federal government in particular, in the social and economic life of the country and its citizens.

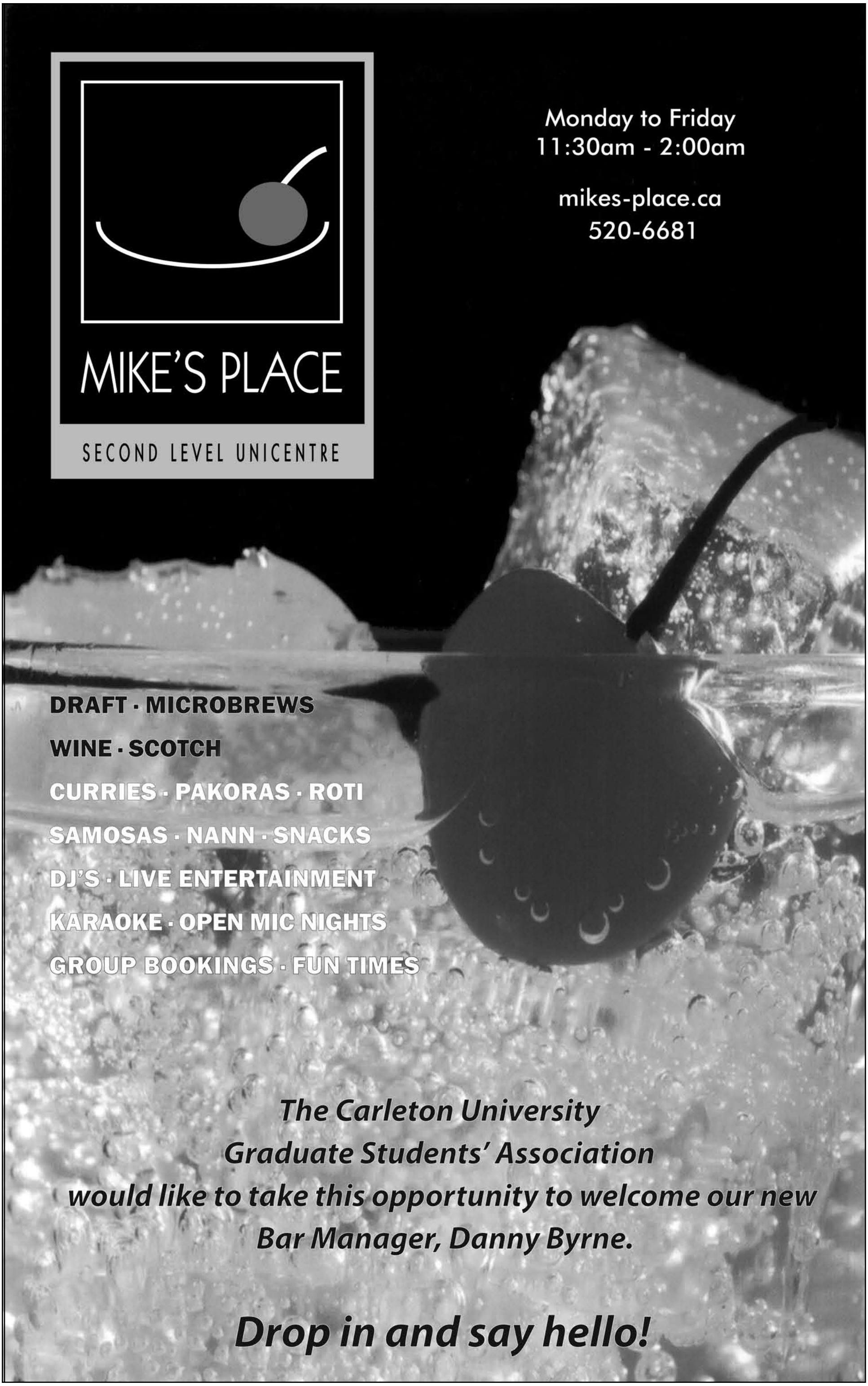
Paul Martin's budget of 1995 crystallized the story perfectly: that we had been living beyond our means, and that in order to have any role at all for government, we had to be strategic about what government could do given the resources. It was a story of responsibility, of being realistic, of not expecting too much of government.

The Martin budgets did their work. Massive cuts, especially to provinces to fund education, health care, and social programs, worked together with the GST to get rid of the deficit by 2000.

During this time, fiscal conservatives like Jim Flaherty (then a minister in Mike Harris's provincial government) and Stephen Harper (then a lobbyist for the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation) called for zero-deficit pledges from governments to protect taxpayers from being saddled with someone else's leftover debt.

Seeing Harper and Flaherty now gleefully plunge into a recession has thoroughly confused a lot of people, but these men remember very keenly how convenient it was to have no money around to spend on social programs and no room to argue the issue with other interest groups.

In a few years, when and if the economy continues its slow spiral and people begin to get hungry and start demanding serious spending on programs that actually provide people with desperately needed support, the government will be very satisfied to discover that—gee golly shucks—the cupboard is bare.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GROUP BOOKINGS · FUN TIMES
The Carleton University
Graduate Students' Association
would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new
Bar Manager, Danny Byrne.
Drop in and say hello!

Bolivia's New Constitution

by **MATTHEW HAWKINS**

Hundreds of thousands of Bolivians poured into the streets of La Paz and other major cities following a "yes" victory in a constitutional referendum. Bolivia's new constitution is widely accepted as a victory for president Evo Morales and his party, Movement Towards Socialism (MAS).

Bolivia joins other leftist governments in Ecuador and Venezuela that have also passed new constitutions through popular and democratic referendums, creating a platform for what the leaders are calling socialism for the 21st century.

Following the referendum victory, Morales stepped onto the balcony over Plaza Murillo in La Paz and spoke to thousands of supporters, proclaiming a new Bolivia was being created. Morales made direct reference to the hundreds of years of colonialism, which had subjugated and exploited the country's indigenous populations.

"And I want you to know something," Morales told the crowd. "The colonial state ends here. Internal colonialism and external colonialism end here. Sisters and brothers, neoliberalism ends here too."

Breaking the historical legacy of colonialism's oppression and exclusion has been a central goal of the new constitution.

An important symbolic and structural change is the redefinition of the Bolivian state as plurinational. Bolivia has 36 indigenous communities and groups, which make up the majority of the population. Plurinationalism officially incorporates indigenous economic, political, legal, and cultural practices into the Bolivian state.

> "Internal colonialism and external colonialism end here. Sisters and brothers, neoliberalism ends here too."

Indigenous languages are now recognized alongside Spanish as official languages in Bolivia. Article 30 enshrines the rights of all indigenous nationalities, including the right to free determination and territory, protection of sacred places, the use of indigenous political and legal institutions, and the protection of indigenous knowledges, languages, rituals, and symbols.

These rights are further enshrined by constitutional recognition of indigenous communities' autonomy: "Rural indigenous autonomy consists of self-government and the exercise of self-determination for rural indigenous nations and native peoples who share territory, culture, history, language, and unique forms of juridical, political, social, and economic organization" (Article 289).

The right to education, health care, and work are also recognized as the state's responsibility in the new constitution. Other major changes include the assertion of Bolivia's sovereignty over its natural resources, including its large reserves of natural gas, steps forward in terms of gender equality and rights, workers' rights, and a declaration of Bolivia as a pacifist state. The constitution also makes access to a clean and sustainable environment a right for current and future generations.

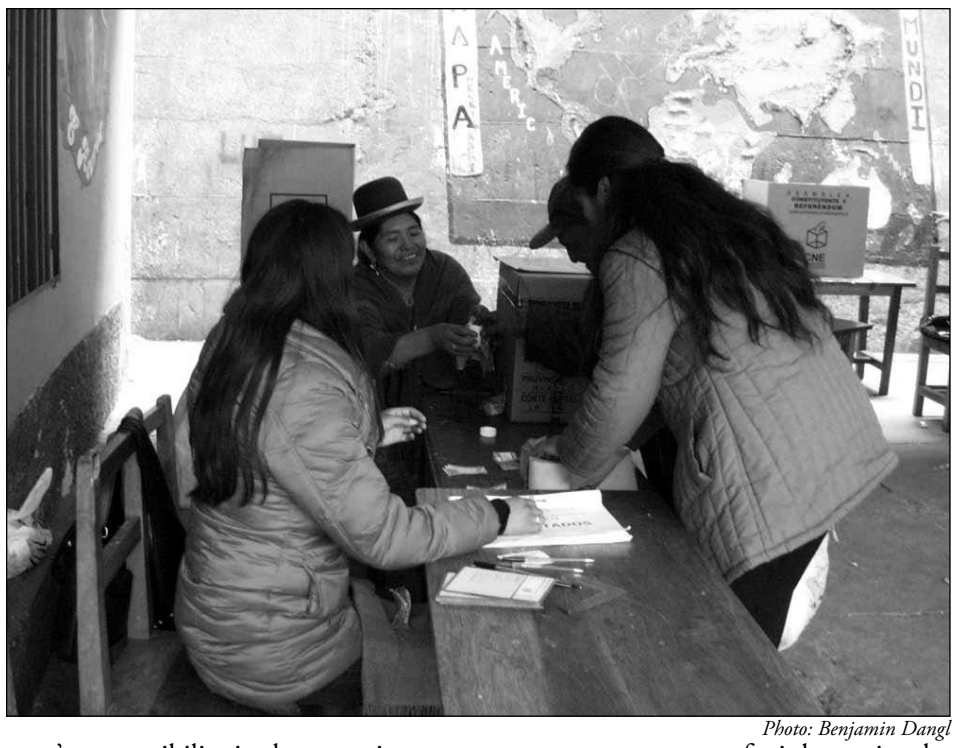


Photo: Benjamin Dangl

The actual impact of the new constitution's more broadly defined areas will depend heavily on the Morales government's ability to pass legislation to bring the the spirit of the constitution into law. A major hurdle for Morales and his MAS government is the right-wing opposition, which is in control of natural-gas-rich Amazonian states.

Last September, a wave of violence in the region lead to the deaths of dozens of Morales supporters. Reconciling with the opposition parties will be MAS' greatest challenge as Bolivia moves forward with the consolidation of the gains made within the new constitution.

Matthew Hawkins is a graduate student at the Institute of Political Economy studying plurinationalism and indigenous movements in Ecuador.

Photo: Miranda Cobb

Is Another World Possible? A Report from the 2009 World Social Forum

by **MIRANDA COBB**

Having been exposed to the academic rhetoric and third-hand criticisms directed towards the somewhat mythical entity of the World Social Forum (WSF), I set off in the dead of the Ottawa winter, trading in my skates for sandals, to experience it for myself in the Brazilian Amazon.

"The World Social Forum in the Amazon heralds the dawn and builds it"

From January 27 to February 1, I was one of over 100,000 people from around the world who participated in the semi-organized chaos of presentations, dialogues, and performances that made up a single event combining the 9th WSF and 5th Pan-Amazon Social Forum.

The WSF, a counter-conference to the World Economic Forum, attracted a very diverse crowd of lefties: anarchists, NGOs, unions, religious organizations, indigenous groups, students, professors, grassroots organizers, political parties, and on and on.

Multiple concurrent worlds emerged—people partying at the youth camp, others theorizing the meaning of the WSF movement, some practicing sustainability in the peace camp, individuals giving voice to the struggles of their communities, movements working to connect through international networks, and those bearing witness to it all, just to name a few.

I found that the welcome letter presented on the first page of the official program—first in Portuguese, then English, Spanish ,and French—grounded me well in the underlying discourse of the forum: "Holding the WSF in the Amazon demonstrates the acknowledgement of the vital importance of the natural resources that still exist in this part of the planet and which are tremendously threatened by the hegemonic model," it read. "It also values the incredible capability of Pan-Amazon peoples (Indigenous peoples, riverside dwellers, slave descendents, and workers) to resist the century-old domination, the exploitation and destruction of their natural resources, their cultures and the quality of their lives."

Given the above context, the focus of the WSF was on indigenous peoples and the environment. But at any given time during the forum, there could be 100 planned and unplanned sessions going on, on topics ranging from climate change to corporate responsibility, alternative education models, and the future of the WSF and Global Justice Movements.

The WSF, like any good social movement, comes rife with contradiction. It is situated in the global south in order to make it more accessible to lower-income countries and peoples. The forum participants provide economic stimulation as they flood campgrounds, hostels, hotels, and restaurants. However, in Belem, many of the small-scale sidewalk vendors and street youth of the city centre were chased out or arrested and the police presence was doubled.

The youth camp, comprising hundreds of tents, was situated on the agricultural university campus and destroyed the grounds of the rubber-tapping tree study area. The influx of 100,000 people brought the transit system and roads to a standstill, shutting down areas of the city.

For me, the real strength of the forum I experienced (the forum was massive and there were many varied experiences to be had) was, first, the appropriation of space by the oppressed, voiceless, and disenfranchised peoples of the world.

Second was the witnessing of truth telling by these peoples and the re-education of the global population fed a reality by corporate-owned media.

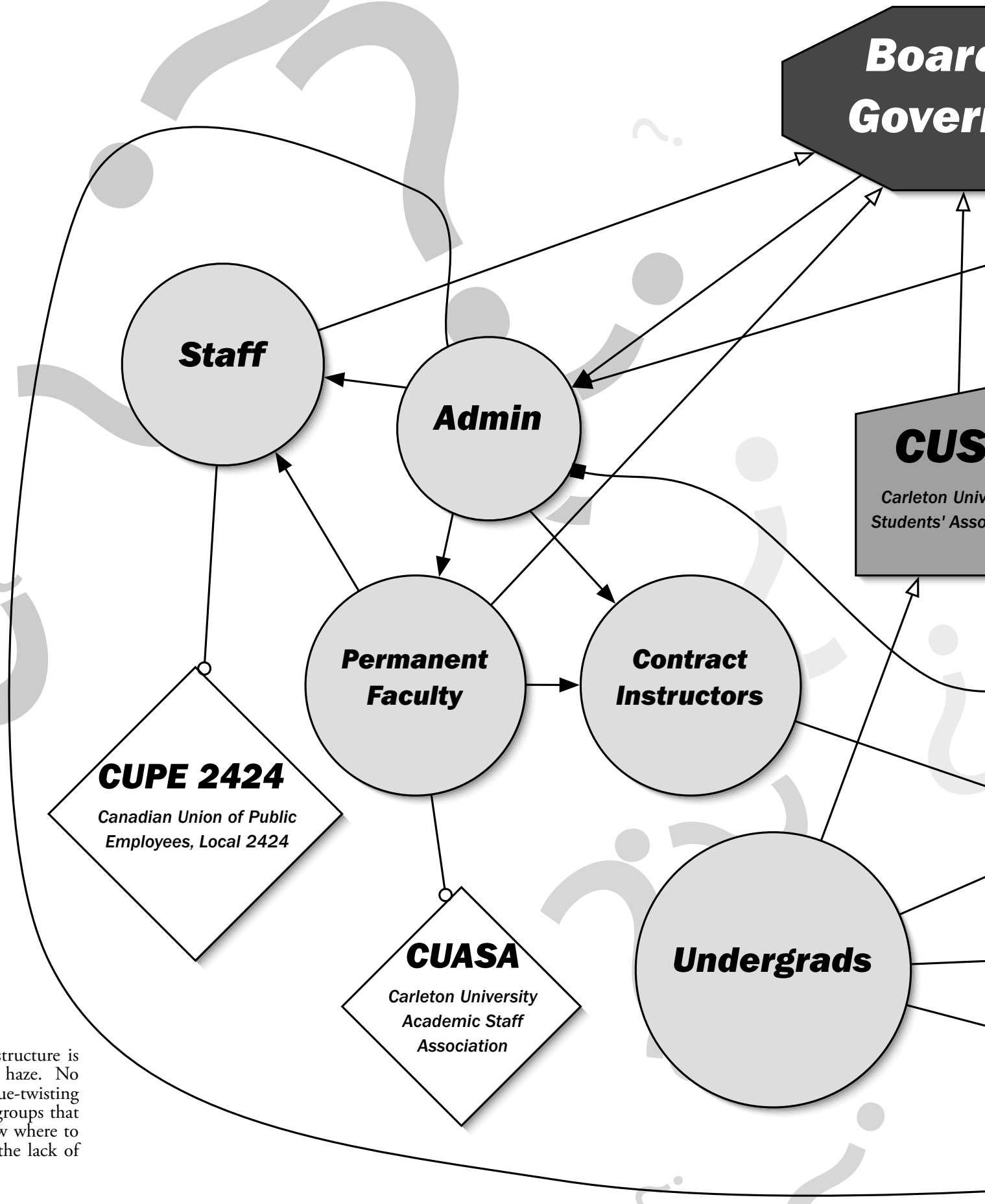
Third, it was in the connecting up of these peoples to individuals, groups, and movements working together in the struggle to appropriate broader social, political, and economic spaces around the globe.

For those who believe that another world is possible, this is a good step towards it.

Miranda Cobb is completing her MA in Political Economy and was at the WSF as part of a francophone delegation presenting on mining practices in Canada.

DISORIEN

PULL AND SAVE THIS GLAMOROUS AND COLLECTABLE PINUP POSTER MAP OF THE VARI



Typically, when the Carleton governance structure is mentioned, eyes glaze over in a disengaged haze. No wonder! It's a convoluted matrix of tongue-twisting acronyms. But it's important to know the groups that claim to represent you, if only so you know where to direct your template protest e-mail about the lack of good food options on campus.

Board of Governors (BoG)
The top decision-making body in the university. Anything that has to do with university finance and long-term strategy is done through the BoG. The majority of board members are "community members" often recruited from the leadership of the corporate sector. Although formally the board is the boss of the administration, in practice the administration sets the agenda and the board supports the administration

Senate
Carleton's highest academic body, with the authority to decide curricula, award degrees, and develop regulations for students. Most of the 72 senators are faculty, while the remainder is made up of the administration and 12 elected students.

CASG (Carleton Academic Student Government)
CASG coordinates undergraduate representation on Carleton's academic bodies. They aim to provide a bridge between the university and students. CASG is not an independent organization of students, like CUSA or the GSA. It is an instrument of university governance, and its executive works closely with the university administration.

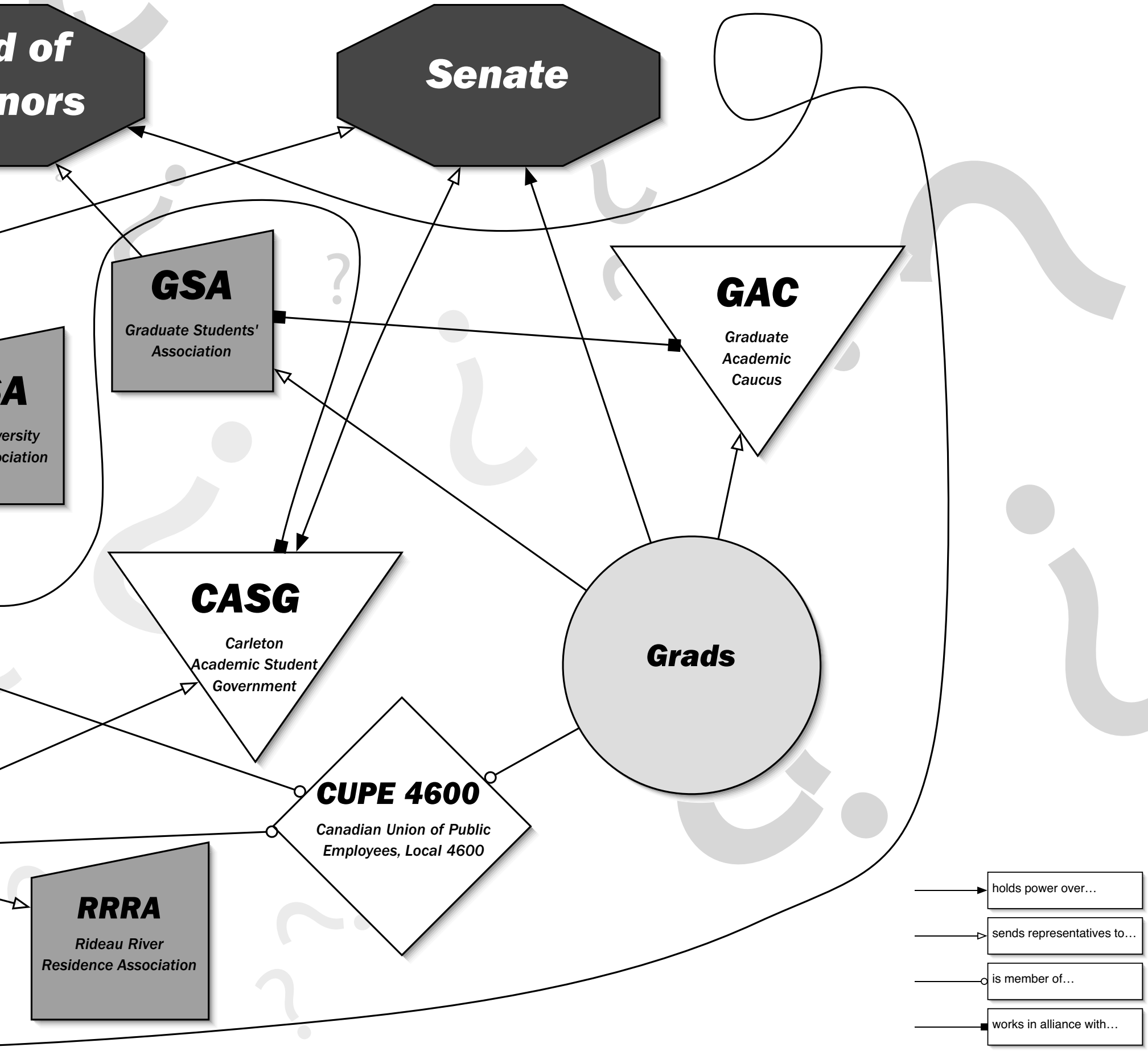
GSA (Carleton Graduate Students' Association)
The GSA represents, serves, and advocates for graduate students. They are lead by an executive elected by paper ballot every winter, held to account by a council elected every September, and are best known as the folks responsible for Mike's Place. However, they also coordinate campaigns for post-residency fees and lower tuition and co-fund services like Carleton's food bank and the health plan.

GAC (Graduate Academic Caucus)
A sub-body of the GSA comprised of members of departmental societies, it it discusses issues of an academic nature.

CUSA (Carleton University Students' Association)
CUSA represents, serves, and advocates for undergraduates. While many students are introduced to them through scandals created/inflated by the national media, they also run the campus equity centres, clubs and societies, the health plan, Oliver's, Rooster's, and Haven Books. This year most of their energy has been spent bringing Haven Books under student command, orchestrating the Drop Fees campaign, and setting up the shuttle bus service.

NTED YET?

OUS ORGANIZATIONS, BODIES, AND ACRONYMS THAT MAKE UP THE CARLETON UNIVERSE.



RRRA (Rideau River Residence Association)
The RRRA represents the voice of students living in residence. They facilitate the integration of new students into campus life through an orientation program run with CUSA, as well as events run throughout the year. Lead by an executive elected every winter by paper ballot and a council of reps elected by floors, they push for better food, proper residence maintenance, and affordable residence fees. However, most residence students know them as the folks who run Procrastinations and Abstentions.

Unions
Most of the people who work directly for Carleton are unionized. In addition to offering services like health plans, these unions are responsible for collective bargaining. Or in other words, they negotiate the employment contract between their members and the university. In addition the unions defend the workers when the university violates those contracts.

CUPE 4600 (Canadian Union of Public Employees)
This union is unique in that many of its members are also students. It is made up of teaching assistants, as well as contract faculty, who teach most of our classes at Carleton. They are currently fighting to get the university to prioritize a living wage for teaching staff over bonuses for senior administrators.

CUPE 2424 (Canadian Union of Public Employees)
This union is made up of all those nice folks who may or may not frustrate you as you negotiate your way through your degree. They are the support staff found in departmental offices, the registrar, the business office, and pretty much every other Carleton job that doesn't involve teaching or being paid over $250,000.

CUASA (Carleton University Academic Staff Association)
This body is made up of the certified librarians, faculty, language instructors, and other lecturers on campus. They are dedicated to the academic quality and integrity of Carleton and defend the academic freedom of Carleton's academic staff. And, when that's all done with, they also run services including grievance support, bursaries, and career development support for members.

EDITORIAL

Two-sided stories? Not in *The Leveller*

If you have read the paper in any semblance of the expected order, you will have noticed by now that we at *The Leveller* don't put a lot of stock in being objective. We like to editorialize at least a little all the time, in our stories and our headlines and often even in our choice of images and layout.

By now you know where we stand on the recently resolved bus strike, the Board of Governors' new guidelines (but just to be safe, you might as well read the editorial, too), the CUSA elections, deregulation, deficit financing, Orwellian snitch legislation, and Bolivia's glorious new constitution.

We don't kid ourselves that our views are mainstream, or that all our readers will agree with us on all these points or even appreciate what we have to say. In fact, we hope that we ruffle a few feathers. We want letters, and one sure way to get letters is to ruffle feathers.

Over the next few issues, we'll be taking on some more controversial topics and taking what we promise will be a crystal clear perspective on these topics. This promise is, in a sense, our raison d'être.

We are not in the business of printing unbiased news, partly because we don't believe unbiased news exists, but mostly because we think news that proclaims itself to be objective is less interesting to read and to write, and ultimately less valuable as news.

The expectations that have solidified into standard professional journalistic practice, most notably presenting 'both sides' of every story equally and maintaining a clear boundary between opinion and fact, make newspapers less interesting, less meaningful, and less useful as organs of public opinion.

The history of the press is full of examples of openly polemical journalists and publications that were of immense importance to their readers by the very fact of their being polemical.

Think of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison of the *Spectator*. Think of H. L. Mencken or William F. Buckley. Or, in Canada, of Frank Underhill at the *Canadian Forum*, or even B. K. Sandwell at *Saturday Night*. If they had presented both sides, had stood by impartial, no one would know their names.

Think of George Orwell's reporting on the Spanish Civil War, which was deeply biased against totalitarians of the left and right. Or Hannah Arendt's writings on Adolph Eichmann's trial, which are the only ones anyone still reads. These are one-sided stories of the best kind.

Even today, when a narrow conception of journalism as objective and unbiased reporting rules, some of the best, most well-respected publications make a point of taking sides when they tell a story. Think of the *Guardian Weekly* or *Harper's Magazine*. They are good because they are biased, not despite the fact.

A single, stable, and openly stated authorial viewpoint doesn't negate the value of the facts a writer presents his or her readers with. In fact, by presenting the reader with a reason why the news matters, it makes the news all the more significant, more important—or, as we like to say in the newspaper business—more newsworthy.

It also invites readers to actively engage with the news that's presented and with the way it's presented. By drawing explicit attention to its editorial inclination, a paper invites readers to read all news, not just its own news, critically and creatively.

And that is the whole point. See, we at *The Leveller* don't just want to be read. We don't just want to be the newspaper of record or the newspaper that is the most interesting to read in Ottawa. (Yes, Ottawa—not just Carleton.) We don't just want to be relevant.

We want to forge a new relationship between readers and writers, to create a cantankerous community in words, a space upon which we can throw each other around, feel each other up, and just generally get intimate. For this to happen requires, at a minimum, that you know where we stand and what we look like.

And so we come to our guarantee. We pledge never to be objective, never to present as equally valid two competing conceptions of an issue, never to place undue importance on the distinction between editorializing and writing the news.

Offended? Well, great. Write us a letter and tell us all about it.

We pledge never to be objective, never to present as equally valid two competing conceptions of an issue, never to place undue importance on the distinction between editorializing and writing the news.

EDITORIAL

The Board of Governors' new gag guidelines

Guidelines recently adopted by Carleton's Board of Governors barring members from dissenting publicly from board decisions are anti-democratic, irresponsible, and ultimately embarrassing to the university. They have been passed under a shroud of secrecy, without comment, in an effort to further enshroud secrecy and stifle comment. They should be put out of their misery.

The Board of Governors is the governing body of the university that is responsible for finance and non-academic operations, overseeing the administration of the university, and ensuring adherence to good business practices. In its ideal form, a board is composed primarily of people with no direct connection to the university—and no interest to promote or defend—who will check irresponsible decisions.

In practice, external members of the board often bring a business ideology along with their business expertise and are only too willing to be convinced that tuition must always rise, that unions must always be antagonized, and assets must always be capitalized. Knowing nothing about the university themselves, external members are effectively herd animals, corralled by a senior administration they pretend to oversee, chewing thoughtlessly on whatever the administration feeds them.

That is to say, however independent external members of the Board of Governors are in theory, they are far from independent in practice. Their formal independence makes them dependent on the people they are meant to be independent from. It is rare indeed to see a board member criticize an action or policy of a university on business grounds, though the opportunities abound.

The gag rule, then, isn't designed to silence external members of the board. It's for the internal—that is elected—members of the board, the representatives of students, staff, and faculty. These positions, which were created as part of a general democratization of the universities after the 1960s, combine elements of independence and representation.

As members of the board, student, staff, and faculty representatives are responsible, like all board members are, for the overall financial viability of the university. But as elected representatives of their constituencies, they are also responsible for speaking on behalf of their constituencies—for speaking, more particularly, the expressed political will of their electors, where it is known.

For example, a student who seeks a seat on the Board of Governors and runs on a theme of opposition to tuition fee increases is bound by his or her election to oppose tuition fee increases. That student must propose alternative policies, point out flaws in the policy, and attempt to rally support from other board members to vote against the policy. Anything less would be a betrayal of the mandate he or she was given by the voters.

Let's say the board votes to raise tuition. What happens then? According to the new guidelines, the board member keeps quiet, in deference to the will of the majority. Assuming that the vote was held in the "private" session, as these things sadly are, no one will know how board members—including the student elected to oppose tuition fee increases—voted.

The same would apply to staff and faculty representatives who dissented from board policy in labour disputes. Or in instituting a hiring freeze, or contracting out services, or any number of decisions that might affect these constituencies of the university. The gag law would shroud all of these decisions, and the positions taken by elected representatives in particular, from public knowledge.

For a board overseeing a publicly funded institution, charged with ensuring financial responsibility and corporate transparency, this kind of draconian and defensive restriction on free speech is not only unnecessary, it is irresponsible. As Carleton students, staff, and faculty, and as Ontario taxpayers, the board's business is our business. It should be done openly and publicly.

For the students, staff, and faculty elected to the board, their responsibility to their constituencies is undermined by the new guidelines, which prioritize board unanimity (which the board executive calls "collegiality," a strange and telling abuse of language) over accountability and democracy, comfort and expediency over good governance.

If the Board of Governors is making wise decisions regarding the business operations of the university, in full consideration of all the available information, and taking into consideration all interested and informed viewpoints, it should not have any problem with expressions of dissent on behalf of any individual board member. Good decisions defend themselves.

If, on the other hand, the board is making lazy, ill-informed decisions based on a very selective reading of situations and a selective presentation of the available options (raise tuition or raise tuition? or maybe raise tuition?), then it is in the public interest, not just in the interest of the affected constituency, for dissent to be heard and to be spread widely.

That the Board of Governors is investing precious time and energy in this kind of neurotic micro-managing of campus opinion is both sad and embarrassing for Carleton University and a clear indication either that they have sorted out how to deal with other more pressing problems (enrollment, endowments, facilities renewal, library books) and are keeping the solutions secret or that their priorities are a bit off.

Let the board members speak. Allow those who voted no to be heard. Don't let the Board of Governors' shame about their own process become Carleton's shame. Down with the gag law and everything it represents.

That the Board of Governors is investing precious time and energy in this kind of neurotic micro-managing of campus opinion is both sad and embarrassing for Carleton University

LETTERS, PLEASE

Are you getting tired of reading this disembodied editorial voice? You should be. By this point in the paper, in every subsequent issue, there will be letters from actual readers. These letters will be the very heart and soul of the paper (aside from the editorials). They will be intelligent, informed, and interesting to read.

They might be funny, though more likely they'll be earnest and didactic, or even angry, 'shocked and appalled' as the cliché goes. They may point out facts that we missed or even misrepresented (unlikely), or they may say we should just pack up and go home because, being reds or pinks or greens or some other offensive colour, our paper is useful only as kitty litter. Those kind are our favourite letters.

significant economy and is a thing of considerable beauty. Once you get into 300- or 400-word letters, you're on thin ice stylistically; why not write an opinion piece?

Beyond being short, letters are different from other content in a newspaper because they don't reflect the editorial stance of the paper. (Opinion pieces, like the one immediately to the right of this 'letter,' are semi-independent of the editorial vision—something roughly halfway between a very long letter and a competing editorial.) They are a necessary supplement to the perspectival purity of the rest of the newspaper.

Only you, dear reader, can provide this essential service. Write us, write us, write us, write us. Then we can get back to editorializing.

editors.the.leveller@gmail.com

Want to get involved with *The Leveller*?

E-mail editors.the.leveller@gmail.com or come to the first story meeting Tuesday, February 24 at 2pm

To be followed by a Launch Party at 3pm

Mike's Place

COMMENT

Blaming the victims? Let's try solidarity with strikers instead

by TIM WINZLER

According to most media and students here at Carleton and elsewhere in Canada, union members are horrible people: greedy, unproductive, and selfish special interest groups enriching themselves at the cost of the public and the economy.

OC Transpo drivers for example are attacked for being paid up to $100,000 a year just to sit on their asses and drive people around for a few hours a day. Or take the apparently aloof and ivory-tower York TAs and contract faculty, who have great teaching opportunities, but rejected an 11% wage increase offer over two years from the university.

And they cause all this hassle while Canada is in the midst of the worst world economic downturn of the last 80 years? How dare they? Shouldn't they be treated like every other employee in the free market, making concessions in order to keep jobs? Isn't their behaviour perverse and asocial when you recognize what's going on on a day-to-day-basis in this country?

I don't think so. And there are some good reasons why this might be not the case.

First, are unions greedy?

In terms of the payment, contrary to what is widely said, they are no millionaires. OC Transpo drivers would reach the $100,000 mark only if they worked a totally unrealistic number of hours a day. Similar logic applies to York TAs and contract faculty. Whereas the wages of the latter are not much bigger than those of the TAs, both work way above the contracted work time, which decreases their real wages significantly.

What the media also conceal is that the offered wage increases are nominal, which means before inflation. With an annual inflation rate of 2.5% (last year in Canada it was 2.7%) the proposed 9.25% for the drivers and 11% for the teachers melt down to an increase of a mere 0.58 % and 3% respectively per annum. Does this still appear to be greedy? Barely.

Second, are union workers lazy?

Another argument often brought against unionized labour is that it their jobs are comparatively comfortable and less challenging work. But the bus drivers of Ottawa already have peak hours of up to 12.5 per day, and it is an open secret on the York and Carleton campuses that most TAs work more than just the 10 hours per week they are paid for a course.

So, if these jobs are so well paid and comfortable, why isn't there a run on these jobs? When you talk to TAs here at Carleton, you will often hear that they feel that their teaching obligation is a burden rather than an opportunity, given the fact that it consumes a lot of time that they need for their own research. And there doesn't seem to be a run on bus driver jobs from the student side, although it is (apparently) such a great job.

Maybe then, it is not as good as many people say or assume. Could it be that this repetitive, long-lasting job might be much harder than it seems? Have you done it before? Can you say it is an easy job?

Third, are union workers asocial?

It is often said that unionized workers are taking universities or even entire cities hostage with their practices and that taxpayers have to pay for it with inconvenience and rising taxes. But, on the other side, what happens if unions really succeed in getting what they want?

They will have either more money or better working conditions or both. They will spend this money in the community and thus share their victory with others. Improved working conditions will set standards for other bargain areas in the free market.

There seems to be a strong culture of 'negative solidarity' out there. People's wages get cut or they lose their jobs; university students, Carleton's included, have to work harder to get a decent position. So they ask, "Why do I have to endure so many concessions and they don't? Why shouldn't they suffer as much as I do? Wouldn't that be the right thing to do now?"

People have to ask where this kind of solidarity leads us and whether it should be replaced by a positive one. Sure, a strike can have catastrophic consequences for all people suffering from it, including undergraduate students. But the point is that maybe we first should dig a little bit deeper and search for some broader conclusions and some long-term perspectives instead of retreating to a convenient blaming of the victims.

What about rising fees and decreasing funding? Isn't it precisely this that makes strikes so painful for us? What could the state do to lift some burden off our shoulders instead of weighing us down with responsibilities?

We as university students could make a start in showing more empathy with unions. Let's hope, despite back-to-work legislation and binding arbitration, that they will get some improvements. Let's consider a more positive solidarity with unions. You might benefit much more from it later than you think now.

So you might reconsider greeting drivers with "a friendly fuck you" or "a middle finger salute" as widely suggested. They deserve respect because they have fought for their (and our) rights, not despite it.

So you might reconsider greeting drivers with "a friendly fuck you" or "a middle finger salute" as widely suggested. They deserve respect because they have fought for their (and our) rights, not despite it.

ANDREW VINCENT VERSUS MALE NURSE

Comparing and contrasting the capital city crooners

by JENNIFER WHITEFORD

Andrew Vincent left his heart in Ottawa and moved to Toronto for grad school after years of playing locals both solo and with his band, The Pirates. His new solo album, *Rotten Pear*, was released at the end of January. His song "Diane" walks a perfect lyrical tightrope between clever and heartbreaking.

1. Name?
Andrew Vincent

2. Age?
34

3. Title of new album?
Rotten Pear

4.Instruments played?
Guitar, air organ, synthesizer, bass clarinet

5. Day job?
Grad student

6. Best thing about playing solo as opposed to playing in a band?
Less gear. Less smelliness.

7. Reason why people should or shouldn't have to pay for recorded music?
People should have to pay for music because it's worth paying for. And they should have to share it because it's worth sharing and sharing is good. So that means there will always be some free music. That's a good thing.

8. Favourite thing about Ottawa?
Good people who aren't afraid to do their own thing.

9. Thing you miss about the city when you leave it?
Friends and food.

10. Best album to listen to in the winter?
Mark Kozalek. *What's Next to the Moon.*

11. Person/band you would tour with if you could tour with anyone you wanted?
So many. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

12. Best description of what your new album sounds like?
An old backyard filled with broken toys.

13. Church of Analog or the Temple of Digital?
Bobby Digital.

14. Reason why you're a typical musician?
Self-doubt.

15. Reason why you're not a typical musician?
I never know who sang that song.

16. First thing you think when you wake up in the morning?
Five more minutes.

17. Example of acoustic music gone drastically wrong?
I'll pass.

18. Love song you will be listening to this Valentine's Day?
"More than I can talk about" by The Mice

19. Current mode of transportation?
Feet/TTC/1994Nissan Pathfinder

20. Favourite indoor winter activity?
Soup, bread, wine. Is that three activities?

Davey Quesnelle, known for playing in multiple local Ottawa bands, has just released his solo project under the moniker Male Nurse. It is a perfectly formed pearl of an EP, and he's letting people download **it for free on the Internet. The lead track, "Goodbye Forever (No, Really)," is the perfect song to listen to as winter drags on and your misery needs company.**

1. Name?
Davey Thomas Noel Quesnelle

2. Age?
25

3. Title of new album?
My Friends Are All Assholes

4.Instruments played?
Guitar, banjo, bass, minimal drumming.

5. Day job?
I work at Spaceman Music, where I can often be seen re-stringing guitars or getting haggled.

6. Best thing about playing solo as opposed to playing in a band?
Solo playing allows me to make lots of mistakes and not make anyone angry; also, I don't have to split $20 four ways after a show.

7. Reason why people should or shouldn't have to pay for recorded music?
Music should be free, but so should food, shelter, and clothing. I guess.

8. Favourite thing about Ottawa?
My friends. Pho. *Standard Issue* magazine.

9. Thing you miss about the city when you leave it?
Politeness. Does anyone else find Toronto and Montreal mean? Maybe I'm just a big baby, and Ottawa is my crib.

10. Best album to listen to in the winter?
Casiotone for the Painfully Alone or Springsteen's *Tunnel of Love*.

11. Person/band you would tour with if you could tour with anyone you wanted?
Steve Malkmus! Jeff Tweedy solo. Rolf Klausner backing ME up.

12. Best description of what your new album sounds like?
A culmination of five years of writing in seven songs recorded in three hours. Actually six not counting the cover. A singer-songwriter finding his voice. Drunk sex in bathroom stalls.

13. Church of Analog or the Temple of Digital?
Analogagnostic?Waspy. PresbeTUBEian.

14. Reason why you're a typical musician?
I call my guitar by a name. I obsess over 'tone.' My parents think I'm wasting my 'time.'

15. Reason why you're not a typical musician?
I am a huge baby. I obsess over food. My parents think I'm swell. My guitar's name is Guitar.

16. First thing you think when you wake up in the morning?
Where are my pants?

17. Example of acoustic music gone drastically wrong?
Korn's unplugged album. Scott Terry after a certain amount of beers.

18. Love song you will be listening to this Valentine's Day?
"Happy Valentine's Day" by Outkast. "Holy Diver" by Dio.

19. Current mode of transportation?
My two feet! No biking. It's too difficult when you're… not coordinated at the best of times.

20. Favourite indoor winter activity?
Personal grooming. Chocolat chaud. Whiskey. Swiss Chalet. Falling asleep in her lap.

FIGHTING ARTS CUTBACKS THE POSTMODERN WAY

An argument and a scene

by **LAURIE FYFFE**

Recently, I decided to step up to the microphone and make a personal appeal to the mayor and city councilors of Ottawa to reconsider deep cuts proposed in the city's 2009 budget. Specifically, a total of 286 arts, cultural, and heritage organizations faced reductions in funding of between 54% and 100%.

Grants to individual artists for creation, production, and collaboration would be totally eliminated.

Throughout a week of protests and press coverage I listened to the arguments, the concern, and the outrage.

In many parts of the globe, artists are going through the same ritual.

As we face increasingly tough times, the question is being asked over and over: why should we support culture when so many other essential services are going broke? It's an old way of thinking: keep the roads paved, the buses moving, the sewers flowing, and everything else after that is a frill. Hard-core industries pay for core services and the relationship is a cycle of dependency that leaves 'soft' services, like the arts, nourished on the sporadically available surplus.

But what if we are on the verge of a new model? One that proves that a vibrant cultural community isn't just good for itself, it's good for the city it thrives in—that in proportion to what it generates, culture doesn't have its hand out; it has its hand on the wheel of commerce.

The current argument for funding culture is that a thriving cultural scene is a stimulus for tourism, the hotel industry, and restaurants. But not only does this argument put the focus on the outsider, it also sells culture short.

What if we could quantify, in measurable terms, the impact of a creative environment on the kind of original thinking that implements public policies that produce results? What if we could claim a kind of 'credit of influence' for architecture that endures, or the thinking that creates an urban infrastructure that will support expansion in the 21st century, or the creation of sustainable industries?

What if all areas of a city's ruling hierarchy mirrored the non-confrontational model of collective creation? Instead of the squabbling, competitive, 'masters of the universe' model that seeks to topple the top brass.

When I began thinking about an article on cuts to culture as we face a worldwide recession, I was initially drawn to the rationalization that would have me quoting statistics that show how Ottawa's theatres impact visitors and tourists. But, frankly, I doubt tourists to the nation's capital regularly seek out the kind of mid-sized theatres I attend or write for. I suspect they go to the Tulip Festival.

So, here's my argument for supporting culture, even as the bridges are crumbling and potholes are expanding—and yes, even as we flounder amid the scantily scraped sidewalks of a city sans buses!

Declare culture an essential service!

Yes, vote for round-the-clock poetry, plays, music, and dance. Non-stop painting, singing, tap dancing, and oratory!

Who knows, with the cultural model leading the way, defining how we build and maintain all our cities, some non-essential services, like dumping toxic waste into landfill sites, arming police with tazers, and even fighting wars, might fall to the bottom of that urban infrastructure budget.

Photo: Jessica Ruano

(The scene is Ottawa City Hall, Ontario, Canada. The Council Chamber features a circular conference table with most city councilors in attendance. Mayor Larry O'Brian is on a raised platform and desk. Enter the playwright acting as herself.)

– Good morning, your worship, members of council, members of the public and press. I would like to speak to you about the role of the individual artist in this community and why funding initiatives that assist individual creation are so important.

– I have been a theatre artist, actor, playwright, and director for over 20 years. Having experience of both time and different artistic spaces, I have observed upon my return to Ottawa—a city I grew up in, and have worked in over the years—an extraordinary burst of theatrical activity that is exciting and I think unprecedented.

– From the rehearsal halls of the Ottawa School of Speech and Drama, where I teach, to the stages of the Great Canadian Theatre Company, where I am a member of the Playwrights' Unit, to the Ottawa Fringe Festival, where I staged a production last summer, the professional theatre scene in Ottawa is making work for its creators and building an audience for the future.

– In the space of time allotted to me today, I would like to focus not on the specifics of the economic argument, but on how I think a vibrant arts community makes a city a better place to live. Because I do care a great deal about the city in which I live.

– I ride a bike, so I care about roads. I take public transit, so on a cold winter night in the freezing rain, I like to see a bus coming my way. And when I go out for an evening of theatre, or dance, or music, I like to make my way home feeling safe.

– So, when I am asked to rank city services such as the police, fire department, hospitals, or roads in a list that includes culture, I think, "Well, I don't want to live in a city that has an underfunded police department or an ill-equipped fire department."

– But, then I think, there's something wrong with this kind of comparison. It lacks proportion. It lacks an acceptance of balance. There are things a city must have to function as an urban centre, to work. And there are things a city needs, to build its character, to retain and attract an educated and contributing population.

– There is a pronouncement oft repeated by the budget slashers that the arts are the icing on the cake, a final touch—nice, but something you can do without. Such thinking, I believe, confuses culture with landscape.

– The arts are not the tasty exterior of a city, they are its inner pulse.

– A group of people pouring out of the new Gladstone Theatre heading off to the cafes, a standing ovation for Third Wall Theatre, a picnic in the park after Odyssey Theatre, the crowds at the concession tent at the Ottawa Fringe, debating which show is a must-see, all become an extension of the performance they have just seen. They take their enthusiasm, their energy, and their intellectual vibrancy to the streets and to their places of work.

– If there is anything that these uncertain financial times have taught us it is that regardless of the sophistication of our worldwide market, we are still at the mercy of human nature.

– When Allan Greenspan testified before the U. S. Congress House Committee on Oversight and Reform, he was asked if, during his tenure as federal reserve chairman, he had any inkling of the behaviour that would account for the collapse of the market? He had none. He professed to be shocked. He thought the system would act in its own interests, that it would never succumb to the excesses of short-term ambition over the longer view to service the public good or indeed its own sustainability.

– In short, he thought that those who ran the stock market knew that their purpose was to help maintain a peaceable kingdom.

– Allan Greenspan had obviously never heard of Macbeth. Or, perhaps he thought that overly ambitious thane was just a character in a play.

– The ephemeral, the life force, the progress of human nature, the realization in stories and characters on stage of who we are, where we have come from, where we might be going, this is what artists address, reflect, interpret, and challenge. The better policy makers consider such factors as well.

– In conclusion, I urge you—as those better policy makers—to evaluate the City of Ottawa arts budget for what it truly is: an investment, a stimulus package, well spent on the creative and resolute forces within our community dedicated to helping you build and maintain a better city.

– Thank you.

(The playwright leaves the stage. But she'll be back.)

Laurie Fyffe is an Ottawa playwright, author of The Malaysia Hotel *(published through Playwrights Canada Press). Her work has been on stage at the Tarragon and Factory Theatres (Toronto), the Blyth Festival and Theatre Kingston. She is enrolled in the University of Ottawa's MA program in dramaturgy. Fyffe is author of* The Triumph of Judith Shakespeare *(produced with the Ottawa School of Speech and Drama), which premiered at the Ottawa Fringe Festival in 2008.*

Remembering War, Badly

Passchendaele (2008, Director Paul Gross) plays at the Mayfair Theatre, 1074 Bank St. at Sunnyside, on February 11, 2009

Photo: www.passchendaelethemovie.com

by Christopher Schultz

In Paul Gross's latest film, *Passchendaele* (2008), he plays the role of Jesus Christ (cleverly renamed Michael Dunne, but a shave and a haircut can't hide who He really is). Christ/Dunne has traded His robes for army fatigues, and boy is He sick of war! A little tired and a little shell-shocked by His experiences in the First World War, Christ/Dunne returns to his home in Calgary, only to discover that the home front doesn't get it. They hate the Germans, including Christ/Dunne's love interest, and they're only too eager to send their children off to die in the trenches. Against all this is the idyllic backdrop of the Calgary foothills, which provides some beautiful contrast to the ugliness of war depicted at the film's outset.

Gross (the director, as well as the Messiah), if nothing else, is good at constructing symbolism. He's also very good at dynamiting his constructions, sending into your exposed eyes the splintered wreckage of his architecture. Gross, with a budget capable of producing the intricacy of a Gothic cathedral, has rolled a boulder on screen and called it a church. It is heavy, clumsy, and holds very little in the way of deep meaning.

It would be easy enough to dismiss a direct-by-the-numbers effort such as Paul Gross's film, but I know how hard it is to make a movie. I've tried.

However, I can't forgive what was ultimately a marketing bait-and-switch, which emphasized the war in the previews while the film is really just a Hollywood melodrama. This could have been a timeless Canadian feature; instead, we get our very own Pearl Harbour.

I will admit that there are some strong performances (Gross isn't half bad, nor is his one-armed pal), and certain parts of the film work very well. Gross's inclusion of the coercive enlistment atmosphere of the time is well placed if not well executed, and the doctor character's interest in high explosives is relevant—artillery, contrary to the mythology of the machine gun, was by far the biggest killer on the Western Front. Some of the scenery is excellent, and the costumes and design of the city seem authentic enough that we can situate ourselves in the historical context.

Unfortunately, the hamfisted way in which he depicts the British recruiting officer, and incongruities about anti-German sentiment (a nurse is fired for being German-Canadian, while her brother is allowed to enlist) overshadow the film. They are nowhere near as ridiculous as the conclusion, which takes place in the cratered, waterlogged remains of the Ypres salient in late 1917.

If the Christ analogy wasn't yet fully developed, it becomes so at the end. The clichés of the home front are one thing, but the clichés of the war are even worse. The Native and the French-Canadian join forces with Christ/Dunne in the climactic scene, and Christ/Dunne even gets to carry His crucifix. The whole thing is a bit bloated, much like the soggy corpses of Passchendaele. Maybe that's the allegory Gross was going for all along—a cleverly disguised meta-film. Perhaps it was, all along, just a lesson in identifying why English Canada shouldn't bother with mainstream filmmaking.

Maybe I'm too cynical. There is one shot of the battlefield that is particularly well done, but also a line of dialogue seemingly lifted straight from *Team America: World Police* ("I promise I won't die"). The historian in me was laughing, the film student was crying, and the entertainer in me was thinking how clever Paul Gross actually is. See for yourself. Just don't expect a war epic.

Chris Schultz is a graduate of Carleton University's Film Studies program and is currently taking his MA in History.

Oscar gold bound to once again disappoint

by **STAFF**

The annual ritual of worshipping naked gold statues is coming again. This year's Academy Awards are continuing in the tradition of trying to balance social relevance, snobbery, and conspicuous consumption. Let's see what is (and isn't) interesting this year.

The Best Picture category has the usual mix of the political, the dramatic, the epic, and the underdog. Coming off a series of best picture awards, *Slumdog Millionaire* is the favourite. This (overly) fantastic tale of love and tragedy set in the slums of Mumbai will face stiff competition from *The Reader* and *Milk*. *The Reader* gains a nod for the strength of Kate Winslet's role as a German SS guard implicated in a gruesome act of mass murder during the Second World War.

This year's Academy Awards are continuing in the tradition of trying to balance between social relevance, snobbery, and conspicuous consumption. Let's see what is (and isn't) interesting this year.

The film, however, is unsatisfying. It floats in the stratosphere of the surreal without ever allowing the audience to touch the firm, cold ground.

Milk is more promising as a competitor to *Slumdog*. It is a fairly honest portrayal of Harvey Milk, who was a civil and gay rights hero but also an opportunistic politician. Given California's recent referendum that revoked marriage rights for the gay and lesbian community, awarding *Milk* Best Picture would be an appropriate political act. And at least *Milk* is worthy of Best Picture on its own terms, as opposed to the 2005 Best Picture, *Crash*, which was Hollywood's capitulation to the worst form of patronizing liberal white guilt.

Frost/Nixon, the story of Nixon's "conviction" on national television by David Frost, a talented British political satirist, will not win. It is a solid film, with excellent acting and direction but lacks the spark of *Milk* or *Slumdog*. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is far too long and at times incredibly boring. You'll be drawn more to the amazing cinematography and sweeping historic reproductions but otherwise wish you had seen another movie.

In many respects, this year's performances are not incredibly impressive. Winslet should take Best Actress for *The Reader* but Angelina Jolie in *Changeling* should never have been nominated. Meryl Streep's role in *Doubt* is predictably good but predictably Meryl Streep. Best Actor ought to go to Sean Penn for becoming Harvey Milk, though Mickey Rourke's powerful performance in *The Wrestler* might snatch the title. Perhaps the most interesting supporting performance comes from Frank Langella and his portrayal of Nixon which is more engaging than Anthony Hopkins' effort in Oliver Stone's *Nixon* mainly because Langella is willing to insert a dose of Carvey-esque parody into the role.

Winslet should take Best Actress for *The Reader* but Angelina Jolie in *Changeling* should never have been nominated.

But, the real question is, will Heath Ledger win for his role as the Joker? Probably. But Ledger's role only has gravity because he is dead. Nobody can watch his sadistic Joker without a small voice in the back of their head saying, "He's dead, he's dead, he's dead." And his Joker stands out because the character is set in yet another crummy Batman dirge.

This year's Academy Awards, like every other, will find a mix of deserved winners, underdog heroics, the snubbed, and pandering to the previously snubbed. You'll find plenty to complain about the Monday after.

Divergence Movie Night

A free monthly series presenting independent GLBTTQ movies.

February 10th: Voices From The Front

In New York City, a distraught activist confronts the mayor with a story of a friend who languished on a cot in an emergency room hallway for nine days, only to die 48 hours after leaving the hospital. In 1988, thousands of activists hold the Food and Drug Administration under siege, demanding faster drug approval. In 1990, AIDS activists converge on the National Institute of Health, calling for a more equitable clinical trial system and expanded research into new drugs and treatment. ***Voices From the Front*** makes clear the emotional and political effects of community activism using the voices of those directly engaged. (90 min)
Sponsored by AIDS Committee of Ottawa & Snowblower 2009

February 24th: Still Black - A Portrait of Black Trans Men

Explores the lives of six black transgender men living in the United States. Through the intimate stories of their lives as artists, students, husbands, fathers, lawyers, and teachers, **Still Black - A Portrait of Black Trans Men** offers viewers a complex and multi-faceted image of race, sexuality and trans identity. **Sponsored by Agitate!**
Queer Women Of Colour, in recognition of Black History Month
(An incorrect date was previously published, we apologize for any inconvenience)

Free Admission, $5 suggested donation.

Club SAW, 67 Nicholas Street. Open 7pm, Movie at 7:30pm

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	12am	2am	7am	8am	9am	10am	11am	noon	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	11pm
Sunday	THE DOCKING STATION	Jeff Green *a/w* Richard Charles	GOSPEL EXPRESS *Howard Peart, Paul Wilson*	Over My Head	Aboriginal CKCU	An Indian Morning *Dr. Harsha Dehejia, Mrs. Pratibha Sampat* The Music, Art and Culture of India	MUSIC FROM THE GLEN *Gord Peeling, Colin Henein* Folk/Celtic/ Traditional	This Island Earth *Tony Daye* World Music				Swing Is In The Air *Jacques Emond* Jazz	Sunday Simcha	Voice Of Somalia Cultural Community	RENDEZ-VOUS HAITIEN In French News & Music From Haiti	The Sixties *Dave Sampson* 1960's Music	Black & Blues *John Tackaberry* Blues/R&B	NIGHT WATCH a/w SUNDAY NIGHT MIND MELT
Monday	NIGHT WATCH a/w SUNDAY NIGHT MIND MELT	Bob Marquis	MONDAY SPECIAL BLEND *Giacomo Panico, Monday Morning Rise-up with Jeff Monaghan* Music & Current Affairs BBC News & Metro News			Crossing Boredom w/ Derek Bradshaw	APPROACHING STANDARDS	Re-Mix	Horses Spilled Milk	Kristal Lotman -Felea		Turn Up The Radio	Cold Heat	Monday's Encounter	China Album a/w Talkayang Bayan	NAMAA-SHOUM *Mehdi Fallahi* Persian Program	The Fantasy Of Persia *Mehdi Fallahi* Persian Programming	Joe Reilly General Music	MELT DOWN Heavy Metal
Tuesday	Mike Mallet a/w Midnight Jam	Dianne Murray	Dan Shields	TUESDAY SPECIAL BLEND *Mike Powell, Adam Coombs, Lucie Hanak* Music & Current Affairs BBC News & Metro News		Mid-Day Mind Control	Thematics	NAMASTE	The Voice Inside Your Head	Unclassifiable	THE HEY MAN AND MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE		Salam Ottawa Muslim Community & Culture	Tinig Pinoy Philipino Music, Community & Culture	Aap Ki Farmaish Indian, Hindi & Urdu Music	Alan Surmachynski Eclectic blend of new and old music		Hammer Smashed Radio	Bew Cocky Salsa
Wednesday	TREAD LIGHTLY Electronic, world, rock, folk, country, soul...	Number One	Dan Shields	WEDNESDAY SPECIAL BLEND *Tic,* Music & Current Affairs BBC News & Metro News		SOUND MIND	Digestive Tracks with Chris and Yaz	Renato Giamberardino	Midweek	Both Kinds of Music		David Sarazin	Remote Planet	Drunken Master Review	Asian Sounds New and emerging Asian music	Punto De Encuentro Latin American Music	Roots & Rhythms *Bruce Walton* Old & new jazz, blues, R&B, gospel, country...	In A Mellow Tone *Ron Sweetman* Jazz	RABBLE WITHOUT A CAUSE *Bernard Stepien* Jazz
Thursday	Stochastic Resonance Laptop mixing W/ Leif Olsen	Overnight	THURSDAY SPECIAL BLEND *Spaces, Places and Faces, David Yazbeck*			WHATEVER'S COOL WITH ME *Ryan Bresee* Indie rock, hip-hop, electronica, classical, jazz, blues, old country...		Dennis Molnar		David Dalle		Janis Lockwood	Guest List Joe Reilley	3rd World Players	Literary Landscapes	Caribbean Rhythms *Cheryl Antoine* Calypso, Soca, Reggae	Now's The Time Impro-vised Music	INFINITE CEILING	Ottawa Live Music
Friday	Time Traveller's Union a/w Heat Wave	Overnight	FRIDAY SPECIAL BLEND Susan Johnston, Music & Current Affairs BBC News & Metro News			FRIDAY MORNING CARTUNES *John Westhaver* A challenging array of rock based music From around the globe		Dylan Hunter Show Rock, Electronic, Alternative		WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY Folk	Weekend Warm-Up *Pat Moore*		Barrio Latino *Juliano Hernandez* Latin American Music		CRIMES AGAINST MUSIC Bill Guerrero	PEACEFUL JOURNEY *DJ Ducats* Straight Hip Hop, No Fluff		THE WARNING Jungle and Drum & Bass
Saturday	THE DEEP BLUE *VH3* Trance Music	Marjan Stojanovic *a/w* Campus Freestyle	SATURDAY MORNING *Alan Wigney, Alan Surmachynski, Phil Hauraney, Bruce Walton*			CANADIAN SPACES *Chopper McKinnon* Canada's most respected folk and roots music		THE BACK FORTY Country	The Groove *Elorious Cain* Canada's longest running disco show		Reggae In The Fields *Junior Smith* Reggae Music		SPIRIT OF VIETNAM	Steve Kirkland An eclectic mix of modern and traditional music from all genres and eras		GruvnFusion Farzad F and Trevor Walker		Vintage Love O Shea Adaggio

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SUNDAY
MONDAY
2-4-1 TUESDAYS
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
Feb 9
7:00pm FROZEN RIVER WINNER GRAND JURY PRIZE - SUNDANCE 14A
9:10pm OF TIME REDUX 東邪西毒 ASHES
Feb 10
7:00pm OF TIME REDUX 東邪西毒 ASHES WONG KAR WAI DOUBLE BILL 14A
9:00pm 2046 14A
Feb 11
3:00pm PASSCHENDAELE CANADIAN WORLD WAR ONE DRAMA 14A
7:00pm PASSCHENDAELE 14A
9:30pm OTTAWA PREMIERE 9 TO 5 DAYS IN PORN R
Feb 12
7:00pm PRIVATE RENTAL: "LEADERSHIP OTTAWA"
9:30pm OTTAWA PREMIERE 9 TO 5 DAYS IN PORN AWARD WINNING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE ADULT FILM INDUSTRY FEATURING SASHA GREY R
Feb 13
7:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE FLICKER AWARD WINNING DOCUMENTARY EXPLORING HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS 14A
9:05pm OTTAWA PREMIERE 9 TO 5 DAYS IN PORN FEATURING BELLADONNA R
MIDNIGHT SCREENING FRIDAY THE 13TH THE ORIGINAL CLASSIC R
Feb 14 VALENTINE'S DAY
2:00pm Smokey and the Bandit THE ULTIMATE DATE MOVIE PG
4:00pm Henry & June R
7:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE FLICKER 14A
9:05pm OTTAWA PREMIERE 9 TO 5 DAYS IN PORN R
MIDNIGHT SCREENING Emmanuelle A TRUE EROTIC CLASSIC R
Feb 15
2:30pm FAMILY MUSICAL MATI MAMMA MIA! SING-A-LONG VERSION PG
5:00pm MALCOLM X PG
9:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE FLICKER MIND-EXPANDING DOCUMENTARY 14A
Feb 16 - FAMILY DAY
12:00pm E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL FREE SCREENING PRESENTED BY TRACY ARNETT PG
2:30pm The Muppet Movie G
4:30pm The Great Muppet Caper PG
7:00pm FLICKER OTTAWA PREMIERE 14A
9:00pm THE TIMES OF HARVEY MILK NR
Feb 17
7:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE FLICKER A DOCUMENTARY FEATURING WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS, IGGY POP, KENNETH ANGER AND MORE 14A
9:00pm CONFESSIONS OF A PORN ADDICT A CANADIAN COMEDY FEATURING SPENCER RICE FROM THE SMASH HIT "KENNY VS SPENNY" 18A
Feb 18
7:00pm THE TIMES OF HARVEY MILK SEE THE DOCUMENTARY THAT INSPIRED THE MOVIE NR
9:00pm MADE IN JAMAICA REGGAE DOCUMENTARY 14A
Feb 19
7:00pm
9:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE AFRICA UNITE BOB MARLEY DOCUMENTARY PG
Feb 20
7:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE STUCK A NEW FILM BY STUART GORDON 18A
9:00pm - FUNDRAISER FOR CHUO FM STEPPING RAZOR RED X PETER TOSH DOCUMENTARY AA
MIDNIGHT SCREENING THE ORIGINAL 1981 CLASSIC! MY BLOODY VALENTINE RAY SAGER IN ATTENDANCE PRECEDED BY Treevenge R
Feb 21
5:00pm SAVING LUNA G
7:00pm OTTAWA PREMIERE STUCK STARRING MENA SUVARI 18A
9:00pm METROPOLIS ENCORE PRESENTATION - LIVE MUSIC G
MIDNIGHT SCREENING STUART GORDON'S RE-ANIMATOR PRECEDED BY Treevenge R

LISTINGS

Tues, Feb 10

Event: ***Aboriginal Awareness Week,*** Feb 9 to 12, Carleton University's Coordinated Aboriginal Student Services is hosting a week-long celebration of Aboriginal life, culture, history and community. At Carleton's Porter Hall, the public can enjoy performances, panels and guest speakers by First Nations, Métis and Inuit presenters. www.carleton.ca/equity/aboriginal/

Film: ***Voices From The Front***, Divergence Movie Night, www.divergencemovienight.com 7:30-10:30pm @ Club SAW, 67 Nicholas Street, ($5).

Talk: ***Darwin Week - Darwin's Landscape Vision*** @ Kailash Mital Theatre, Southam Hall, 8-9pm.

Film: ***The Dark Side of Oz,*** The Shift Film Series, shift.jonathanappleseed.com 6pm @ Umi Cafe, 610 Somerset St. W., ($2 or a beverage) Discussion, followed by the epic synch of Pink Floyd's Dark Side and the Wizard of Oz.

Language: ***Sharing Spanish***, Spanish conversation, HOLAS (Humanitarian Organization of Latin American Students), , 5:30-7 pm @ Loeb RM. B249.

Social: ***Grad Karaoke***, Mike's Place, with host Karaoke Geoff, www.gsacarleton.ca

Books: ***Black History Month (BHM) - Children's Stories in the Diaspora***, 2pm @ Ottawa Public Library, Nepean Centrepointe Branch, Children's Program Room,101 Centrepointe Drive.

Film: ***A Grandmother's Tribe***, Black History Ottawa, www.blackhistoryottawa.org 7 pm @ Library and Archives Canada, Auditorium.

Wed, Feb 11

Music/Arts: ***EASAC Day (Jam Session)***, East African Student Association of Carleton, 11-4pm @ 4th Floor Uni Centre.

Talk: ***Free Trade with Colombia ... at what cost?: Colombian social movements speak out***, Amnesty International, 7:30pm @ Library and Archives Canada, Exhibition Room A, 395 Wellington St.,

Film: ***The Real Dirt on Farmer John***, Carleton Cinema Politica, www.cinemapolitica.org/carleton 7pm @ Tory Building (TB) 447 (free) *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* will turn every idea you ever had about what it means to be an American farmer, or an American dreamer, on its head.

Talk: ***Darwin Week - Putting Darwinism and Religion in their Place,*** 8-9pm @ Kailash Mital Theatre, Southam Hall.

Talk: ***Science Cafe - Green biotechnology: Harnessing plant biomass for biofuels and biomaterials***, 6:30-7:30pm @ Wild Oat Bakery Cafe, 817 Bank St.

Social: ***Trivia Night at Mike's Place***, 8-9pm, www.gsacarleton.ca

Tallk: ***BHM - Cathedral Arts Lecture: A New Economic Partnership for Africa***, 6pm @ Christ Church Cathedral, 420 Sparks St., ($35).

Thurs, Feb 12

Theatre: ***Vagina Monologues***, Women's Resource Centre, 7-9pm @ University of OttawaAlumni Auditorium, ($12 advance and $15 at the door).

Talk: ***Darwin Week - The Struggle for Existence in a World of Climate Change*** 8-9pm @ Kailash Mital Theatre, Southam Hall.

Talk: ***Chocolate Hugs and Kisses, REC Talk, Discussing Matters of the Heart: Relationships, Friendships, "Friendships", etc***. 6-8pm @ REC Hall, 316A Unicentre.

Fri, Feb 13

Music/Arts: ***Live music and open mic***, 9-1130pm @ Umi Cafe, 610 Somerset St. W.

Talk: ***Darwin Week - Killing Time: An Explanation for the Contrivances of Males for Seizing and Restraining Females that Darwin Did Not Attempt to Explain***, 8-9pm @ Kailash Mital Theatre, Southam Hall.

Talk: ***Workshop on Global Labour Market Regulation and Changing Welfare Conditions***, Institute of Politcial Economy, 8:30-12:30pm @ Robertson Hall - Senate Room.

Outdoor: ***A Walk through Ottawa's Crystal Gardens,*** ISSO, @ 128 Unicentre, 4pm, ***Visit the Crystal Gardens (ice Sculptures)***, (Bus fare + additional money for a treat!)

Language: ***Sharing Portuguese***, Portuguese conversation, HOLAS (Humanitarian Organization of Latin American Students), www.holas.ca), 3-4:30pm @ Loeb B249.

Talk/Books: ***Food Crisis: An evening of digestible discussion about food and capitalism with Jim Stanford author of Economics for Everyone, and Wayne Roberts, author of The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food,*** Octopus Books, www.octopusbooks.ca, 7pm @ Auditorium of Library and Archives Canada, free reception with light refreshments 6pm. (free).

Dance: ***Slowdance Night in Ottawa!***, 10pm-2am @ Shanghai Restaurant, 651 Somerset St. W., www.slowdancenight.blogspot.com Sway, turn and twirl your way through the hipster's alternative to speed-dating. It's high school with a happy ending, and it's queer, senior, and couple-friendly too.

Film: ***BHM - Film Screenings: "A Generation of Orphans" and "Women: The Face of Aids"***, 7pm @ Library and Archives of Canada.

Social: ***Mike's Place Speed Dating,*** GSA, Registration 7pm, Begins 7:30pm.

Sat, Feb 14

Music: ***BHM - Hugh Masekela and the Chissa All-Stars,*** 8pm @ Dominion-Chalmers United Church, 355 Cooper St.) ($42 reserved, $35 general admission).

Fair: ***Spotlight Africa,*** 3-8 pm @ Centre francophone of Vanier, 270 Marier Road, (admission: $5) African fair, exhibition, food and fashion, info@spotlightafrica.org

Mon, Feb 16

Film: ***BHM - Africa Dreaming***, 7 pm @ Library and Archives Canada, Africa Dreaming is a series of short films with the theme of love. *Sophia's Homecoming* (Namibia), *Sabriya* (Tunisia), *So Be It* (Senegal), *The Gaze of the Stars* (Mozambique).

Tues, Feb 17

Social: ***Snowblower Closing Party Fundraiser Raising funds for Gay Zone,*** Queer Ottawa, 9-2:00 am @ Helsinki, 15 George Street.

Film: ***The Chapel of Sacred Mirrors,*** The Shift Film Series, shift.jonathanappleseed.com 6pm @ Umi Cafe, 610 Somerset St. W., ($2 or a beverage). A discussion on visionary art with Alex Grey.

Social: ***Grad Karaoke***, Mike's Place with host Karaoke Geoff, www.gsacarleton.ca

Talk: ***Illustrated Lecture***, 7pm @ Exhibition Room A, Library and Archives Canada, The Canadian and Turkish Women's Association of Ottawa with the Forum of Alexandria present an illustrated lecture entitled "Following the trail of history in the Mediterranean: A Cruising Adventure." Guest speaker is Mr. Hassan Eltaher. Refreshments will be served. www.catwao.ca

Wed, Feb 18

Social: ***Trivia Night at Mike's Place***, 8-9pm, www.gsacarleton.ca

Thurs, Feb 19

Talk: ***Old Europe, New Poland, Changing Times: What do these mean for Canada and Poland?,*** Talk presented by H.E. David Preston, Ambassador of Canada to Poland, 2-3:30pm @ Robertson Hall, Senate Room.

Fri, Feb 20

Arts/Music: ***Boshonto***, proceeds go to charity for physically and mentally disabled children of Bangladesh, 7pm @ Kailash Mittal Theatre, ($5 ticket/$8 door).

Arts/Music: ***Live music and open mic***, 9-11:30pm @ Umi Cafe, 610 Somerset St. W.,

Talk: ***Celebrate Black History Month with Emmanuel Jal***, The Ottawa International Writers Festival, 6:30-8pm @ Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts and Humanities, 314 Saint Patrick at Cumberland. Emmanuel Jal was seven years old when he was recruited as a child soldier in his native Sudan. Rescued by an aid worker at 13, he began recovery, and started singing to ease the pain of what had happened.

Music/Dance: ***TIMEKODE: Ottawa's monthly soul shakedown,*** 10pm @ Eri Café, Pan African Social Club, 953 Somerset West at Preston, www.ericafe.ca, ($5, 19+ w. ID). Dancing til late.

Sat, Feb 21

Music/Culture: ***Tropical Showcase*** (Music, Culture, Health) 1-4pm @ Ottawa Public Library Main Branch (Auditorium), 120 Metcalfe Street, An evening of music, culture and fashion from Africa and the Caribbean. Special performances by SIFA choir, Heru drummers and more.

Sun, Feb 22

Sports: ***"I Am A Baller" Annual Basketball Competition"*** 8-3:30pm @ Monpetit Gym, U of O, Participants, in an effort to help eradicate and educate, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among African and Caribbean people in Canada and around the world, an action packed day of sportsmanship, brotherhood and sisterhood. www.kbsassociation.info

Film: ***African Film Festival***, 7-9pm @ Library & Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St. Short compelling films from across Africa.

Mon, Feb 23

Film: ***Peace, propaganda and the promised land: us media and the israeli-palestinian conflict***, Carleton Cinema Politica, www.cinemapolitica.org/carleton @ 7pm, 447 Tory Building (free). Israel is fighting two wars; one in the Occupied Territories and one in the North American media.

Tues, Feb 24

Forum: ***Immigrant Health Forum: A Healthy Immigrant is a Healthy Canadian: Challenges of Immigrant Health,*** 9-12:30 @ Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Drive. Preregistration required for participants (No registration fee), godwin.ifedi@ottawa.ca.

Talk: ***'Faith Based Organizations and the Challenges of Development in Tanzania' by Dr. Amos Mhina,*** The African Studies Institute, Carleton International and the Department of Political Science, 2:30pm @ Robertson Hall - Senate Room.

Talk: ***Integration of Immigrants in Sweden: Employment, Housing, and Voting,*** Pieter Bevelander, 2:30-4pm @ 2017 Dunton Tower.

Social: ***Grad Karaoke***, Mike's Place, with host Karaoke Geoff, www.gsacarleton.ca

Wed, Feb 25

Social: ***Trivia Night at Mike's Place***, 8-9pm, www.gsacarleton.ca

Announcements

Social: ***Powder Puff Football,*** register for a fun-filled one-day football tournament on February 28 in the snow!, Womyn's Centre (308 Unicentre), CUSA Office and RRRA Office Deadline for registration Fri, Feb 13.

Social: ***Sing o Grams, One Day Only***, Feb. 11, forms are available in REC Hall (316a UC).

Writing: ***: The Moose and Pussy seeks Sexy Art and Literature***, Deadline Feb. 14, www.themooseandpussy.com

Dance: ***Social Salsa,*** Learn to Dance and have some Fun. No partner needed. 6-7pm, Tory, 234. Facebook: Social Salsa @ Carleton.

Write: ***The Rostrum Magazine*** Is looking for writers, Search for Rostrum on Facebook *rostrummagazine@gmail.com*

Food: ***Ottawa Good Food Box,*** Orders are due each month by the 1st Wednesday of the month and delivered the 3rd. $5, $10, $15, and $20. CUSA, GSA, or RAAA Offices.

Fundraiser: ***Book Drive for Better Lives, Books For Africa,*** Textbooks and Educational Books are preferred but no books are turned away.

Send your Carleton and Ottawa community events, announcements, and other listings to *editors.the.leveller@gmail.com*

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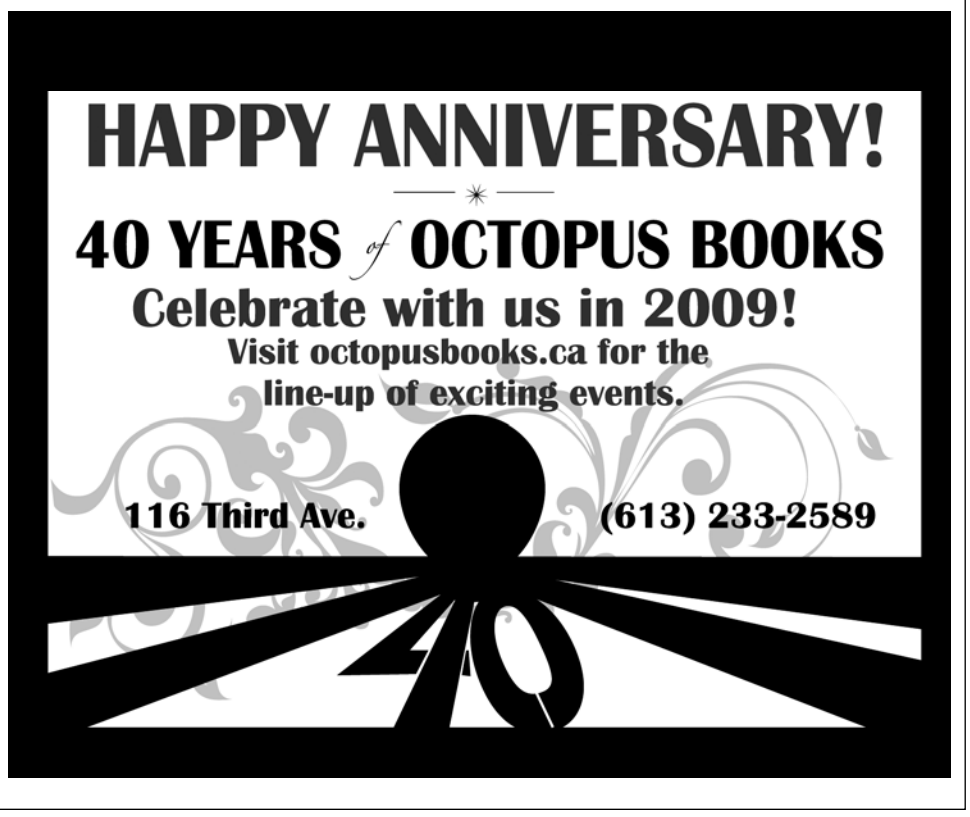
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